

Message Text

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ORIGIN DOE-15

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S/AS: P FARLEY (INFO)
-----054559 252258Z /14
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TO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 187783

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: INFCE, IT

SUBJECT: STATUS OF INFCE
PASS TO SERWER/CALINGAERT FOR PETER BORRE'

1. INFCE, THE INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION,
WAS LAUNCHED BY PRESIDENT CARTER AT AN OCTOBER 1977
ORGANIZING CONFERENCE. FIFTY-THREE COUNTRIES INCLUDING
ALL OF THE WEAPONS STATES EXCEPT THE PRC, NOW PARTICIPATE
IN EIGHT WORKING GROUPS INCLUDING FUEL AVAILABILITY,
ENRICHMENT AVAILABILITY, FUEL SUPPLY ASSURANCES,
REPROCESSING, AND PLUTONIUM RECYCLE, FAST BREEDER REACTORS,
SPENT FUEL MANAGEMENT, WASTE MANAGEMENT, AND ADVANCED FUEL
CYCLES. ITALY IS CO-LEAD COUNTRY FOR WORKING GROUP FIVE,
FAST BREEDER REACTORS, ALONG WITH BELGIUM AND USSR.
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2. URANIUM AVAILABILITY, OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO GOI, IS
MAJOR ISSUE IN INFCE BECAUSE OF INTERNATIONAL UNCERTAINTY
CONCERNING RELATIONSHIP OF RESOURCE PROJECTIONS TO DEMAND
GROWTH FORECASTS FOR NUCLEAR POWER. U.S. BELIEVES MANY
DEMAND FORECASTS SUBMITTED TO INFCE ARE OVERLY OPTIMISTIC.
ACCESS TO RESOURCES IS ALSO MAJOR ISSUE BECAUSE CANADIAN

AND AUSTRALIAN NON-PROLIFERATION REQUIREMENTS GOVERNING AVAILABILITY OF NATURAL URANIUM ARE VIEWED AS VERY RESTRICTIVE BY OTHER NATIONS, PARTICULARLY FRANCE, FRG.

3. NEED AND TIMING OF BREEDER REACTOR, REPROCESSING AND PLUTONIUM RECYCLE COMMERCIALIZATION IS ALSO MAJOR ISSUE. TIMING FOR DEPLOYMENT DEPENDS ON PROJECTED BALANCE BETWEEN URANIUM RESOURCES AND DEMAND FORECASTS FOR NUCLEAR POWER, PLUS COSTS OF PROSPECTIVE FUEL CYCLES. ITALY HAS SUPPORTED EARLY BREEDER AND REPROCESSING DEPLOYMENT. WE HAVE ARGUED THAT SLIPPAGES IN NUCLEAR POWER DEMAND WHEN MESHED WITH PROBABLE URANIUM RESOURCES ARGUE FOR GREAT RESTRAINT IN FURTHER MOVES TO NATIONAL REPROCESSING AND RECYCLE WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THE PROLIFERATION RISKS.

4. THIRD MAJOR INFCE ISSUE IS FUEL ASSURANCES, GUARANTEEING THE UNINTERRUPTED FLOW OF NUCLEAR FUEL TO NATIONS MEETING PRUDENT NON-PROLIFERATION OBLIGATIONS. ESTABLISHMENT OF A BANK OR STOCKPILE OF NUCLEAR FUEL FOR RELEASE TO COUNTRIES SUFFERING SUPPLY INTERRUPTIONS UNRELATED TO FULFILLMENT OF NON-PROLIFERATION OBLIGATIONS IS UNDER DISCUSSION. SIZE AND COST OF BANK AND NON-PROLIFERATION OBLIGATIONS TO BE REQUIRED FOR ACCESS ARE MAJOR ISSUES YET TO BE RESOLVED.

5. THE SCOPE OF INFCE ALSO INCLUDES STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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FUEL CYCLE CENTERS WHICH WOULD CARRY OUT SOME PARTS OF THE NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE UNDER INTERNATIONAL OR MULTINATIONAL CONTROL. THERE IS PARTICULAR INTEREST IN INTERNATIONAL OR REGIONAL MEANS FOR STORING SPENT FUEL. HOWEVER, INFCE HAS NOT YET DEFINED CONCRETE OPTIONS OR PROPOSALS. NOR IS U.S. INTERESTED IN SEEING FUEL CENTER CONCEPT EMPLOYED AS A CATALYST TO FOSTER PREMATURE REPROCESSING OR PLUTONIUM HANDLING.

6. U.S. PROMOTED INFCE AS FORUM FOR DISCUSSION OF PROLIFERATION RISK OF PRESENT AND ALTERNATIVE FUEL CYCLES. THE FEATURES OF THE PRINCIPAL FUEL CYCLE OPTIONS ARE BEING DISCUSSED IN SEVERAL OF THE WORKING GROUPS.

7. INFCE CONCLUDES WITH WORKING GROUP REPORTS AND PROBABLY WITH COMPREHENSIVE REPORT IN FALL OF 1979. DATE FOR FINAL PLENARY SESSION TO BE SET THIS FALL. U.S. HOPES THESE REPORTS WILL BE BASIS FOR NATIONAL DECISIONS CONCERNING NUCLEAR POWER AND FOR SUBSEQUENT INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS ON IMPROVING THE NON-PROLIFERATION CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE. NEXT MEETING OF TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE WILL BE OCTOBER 23,

AND SECOND PLENARY MEETING OF ALL PARTICIPANTS WILL BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 27, BOTH IN VIENNA. KEY ISSUES WILL BE TO OBTAIN GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION ON NATURE OF THE FINAL REPORTS AND WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE ONE SYNTHESIZED FINAL REPORT, AND, IF SO, WHO SHOULD PREPARE IT. EIGHT WORKING GROUPS ARE SCHEDULED TO SUBMIT THEIR FIRST DRAFTS OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL FINAL REPORTS TO TCC BY MAY 31, 1978.

8. HOPE ABOVE BACKGROUND INFORMATION WILL BE HELPFUL IT ITALIANS RAISE SUBJECT. VANCE

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